

THE BIG TRIP

Euphoria Retreat review: nurture a new you in Greece

Restore inner beauty with combined wisdom from ancient wellbeing philosophies

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Euphoria Retreat is the perfect spot for a wellbeing break euphoriaretreat.com

Just 50 minutes by car from Kalamata airport, sitting within a mountain range in Laconia, Peloponnese and surrounded by pine trees, Euphoria Retreat overlooks the bijou village of Mystras, which you can walk to in a few minutes.

Abama Resort Tenerife review: luxury living with a focus on wellness

There is a castle you can hike to and Sparta, the once breeding ground of some of the best soldiers in the world, is only seven minutes away by car. There are plenty of spots to sit outside cocooned by well-maintained, attractive gardens with fruit trees

and flowers, as well as sunbeds to soak up the sun. Best of all, the retreat has its own private forest, with three marked walkways each boasting spectacular views, meaning the restorative role of nature is at your fingertips.



One of the junior suites at Euphoria Retreat Leoncini

The accommodation

My executive deluxe room had its own private balcony showing off a vista of fig, lemon and orange trees in the day and sparkling lights from the villages beneath at night. There was a Nespresso machine including capsules of good-for-you tea such as mountain tea, sage and camomile as well as coffee of course.

I liked the inbuilt spacious desk with a comfortable chair and soft grey upholstered sofa. Warmth came from the scatter cushions, bedspread and patterned wooden headboard. The room also featured wooden floorboards and a latticed bronze coffee table which matched the shimmery metallic gold accents in the adjoining bathroom, from the mosaic tiled walls to the tissue box holder. The flower symbol seen throughout the hotel featured in the form of a felt wall hanging. Best of all, the bed was incredibly comfortable.





Go for a dip in the outdoor and indoor swimming pools euphoriaretreat.com

The facilities

The main building is an 18th century mansion house, with modern upgrades and chic accommodation dotted around. The retreat's private forest not only has marked walkways, but also seating and space to exercise or meditate outside without the fear of the public walking through. There is an indoor pool with a "womb like" area featuring deep water where you can dive into or simply lay on your back feeling relaxed while enclosed with the reassuring dark domed ceiling above. You can then swim to the outdoor pool in the garden area, which is a blessing in summer as there are ample sun loungers around to soak up the vitamin D. In winter you might like to cosy up in the Californian hot tub.

Inside the spa you can embrace the benefits of Kneipp Therapy walking through the foot baths, or detox in the speleotherapy-salt room. If you have a penchant for water therapy, then you can try an in-water massage in the watsu pool. Experience a range of temperatures – the health benefits being long known – with an ice bath, experiential shower, dip in the cold plunge pool, then heat up in the tepidarium, sauna, steam room or hammam. There's also a hair and beauty salon.



Relax and detox at the spa euphoriaretreat.com

Treatments and experiences

There is a daily schedule of activities and classes to join if you wish, covering high intensity circuit classes to fun rebounding (aka trampolining) to silent nature walks, energy movement classes, and breath-work sessions. Talks are also held on the importance of the five elements of nature: water, fire, wood, earth and metal. There are some excursions outside the retreat, for example, visiting local historic churches or nature spots.

The treatments I had were incredible, the Byzantine Hammam Ritual was 60 minutes of bliss from nourishing massage to cleansing scrubs, breathing in the aromatic warmth of the steam evaporating from the marble surround. If you like to dip your toe in spiritual awakening then go for the Sanctuary for The Busy Minds treatment; 50 minutes of the therapist tuning in with what you may be going through both physically and mentally with advice and touch to restore you. The 5 Element Balancing Treatment was a heavenly massage, starting with a warm flannel on your hands followed by hand cream, then a full body massage with the backdrop of beautiful music and aroma of my chosen scent in the air; jasmine and neroli.



The menus feature seasonal and local ingredients Stavros Habakis

The food

The first thing I asked for was an iced coffee with oat milk. There was no oat, but they had almond and it was delicious – perfect for a hot sunny day. I was also delighted caffeine was not a “no-go”, too. As it was my first day, I hadn’t had the 3GL tests yet, so had free rein to order whatever I liked from the diverse menu which clearly have health, seasonality and local ingredients in mind. Breakfast options include Laconian saiti with cheese; a puff pastry stuffed with feta, wild oregano, lemon zest and served with thyme honey and sesame; as well as crepes, granola, fruit salad, eggs plenty of ways and more. Fresh orange juice is available.

For lunch and dinner there’s a starter, main and dessert to choose from. I enjoyed the carrot and ginger soup topped with a succulent prawn and pumpkin seeds, which I added a swirl of the cold pressed Greek olive oil on the table, followed by three lamb chops and grilled vegetables.

I had the 3GL tests the next morning and received the meal plan. It was found out from the pin prick blood test that I was low on glutathione (supporting anti-aging and metabolic wellness) so the doctor prescribed a diet to increase it. This included a hearty bowl of berries, walnuts, sprinkle of oats and vegan protein with almond yoghurt for breakfast, a mid-morning smoothie, Greek salad followed by grilled seabass and steamed vegetables for lunch and olive paste, carob cracker, celery soup and shrimp salad for dinner.



Euphoria Retreat is surrounded by trees and mountains Stavros Habakis

The verdict

Euphoria Retreat is perfect if you are after a wellbeing holiday in an idyllic spot surrounded by trees and majestic mountains. If your aim is to lose weight, mentally reset after heartache or stress, or simply take time out to relax and nurture yourself, then Euphoria is ideal. The diet, fitness and spiritual guidance offered is reassuring, as is the pine forest which will be your backdrop.

Once you have completed the 3GL tests, and met with the doctor, a personalised meal plan will be made for you. But fear not, you won't feel starving even if your aim is to banish the pudge, as the focus is on celebrating natural ingredients and combining them to deliver nutrient rich, fulfilling dishes. At every meal you will be offered plain water or an "infusion", for example rosemary or thyme.

Having stayed under a week, I came away feeling rebalanced, with memories of dipping into ice-cold water springs and walking in the woods with nothing but birdsong accompanying me. I am looking forward to my mini trampoline order to arrive at home so I can carry on relishing my new love – rebounding!

Euphoria Retreat, Mystras, Sparta, Greece; euphoriaretreat.com